

Issue Brief – Disabilities Waiting List

DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

DHS-09-14

SERVICES FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES WAITING LIST

The Division of Services for People with Disabilities (DSPD) is responsible for providing residential, day and family support services for people with mental retardation and other developmental or physical disabilities. DSPD has a list of 1,654 people with “immediate needs” who are currently not receiving any services. DSPD requests an appropriation for FY 2009 of \$6,655,500 (\$2,207,000 from the General Fund and \$4,448,500 from federal Medicaid funds) for about 450 individuals. This request includes the addition of 13 full time equivalent (FTE) employees. The Analyst recommends the Subcommittee place \$1,100,000 from the General Fund for FY 2009 on a priority list.

OBJECTIVE

Each year, DSPD strives to reduce the waiting list. Total funding required to eliminate the current waiting list of 1,654 individuals is \$20.7 million with \$7.2 million (34 percent) from the General Fund and \$13.5 from federal Medicaid match. For FY 2009, DSPD requests 25 percent of the total funding required to reduce the waiting list by 450 individuals.

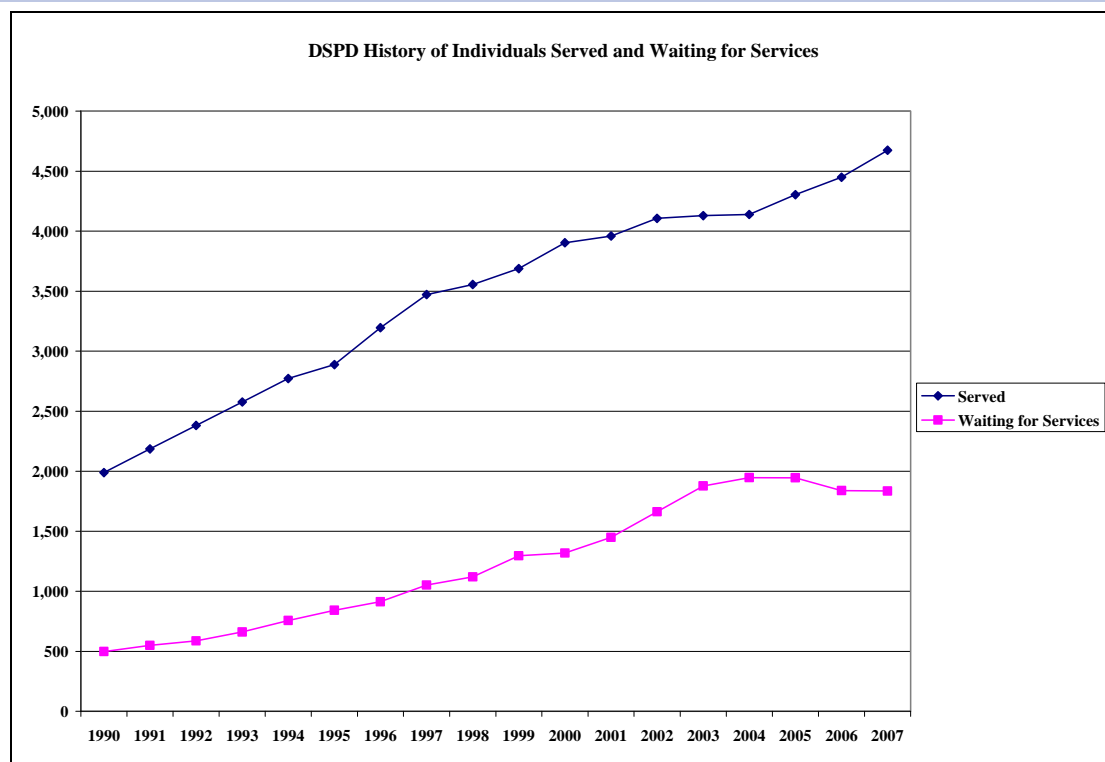
DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS

To receive services, people must have substantial functional limitations in three or more of the following life activities: self care, receptive and expressive language, learning, mobility, self direction, capacity for independent living, and economic self-sufficiency. The services provided range from limited family support to a full array of 24-hour services both in the community and at the Utah State Developmental Center. Services are also available in private Intermediate Care Facilities for people with Mental Retardation (ICF/MR) with funding through the Department of Health. Services in the ICF/MR system is an entitlement, meaning that if a person meets the eligibility requirements, services must be provided.

The State has chosen to provide an alternative to institutional care (nursing homes or ICF/MRs), which is the Home and Community Based Services (HCBS) waiver system. DSPD administers three Medicaid HCBS waiver programs: 1) Community Services; 2) Acquired Brain Injury (ABI); and Physical Disabilities. The HCBS includes a range of services and supports for people in homes and apartments, including full residential placements, located in community settings throughout the State. This system is also funded by Medicaid transfers through its waiver program. Unlike ICF/MR, HCBS is not an entitlement for eligible persons, therefore, services are provided based on available resources. Since there are more eligible people desiring home and community based services under the Medicaid Waiver than there are resources available, the State has a waiting list for these services. The HCBS system is funded through DSPD, which determines eligibility for services in both the ICF/MR and the HCBS systems and serves as the “gatekeeper” for both systems.

Growth in the Waiting List

Over the years, the Legislature has appropriated funding to reduce the waiting list. The following chart shows the growth in the number of people served and the number of people on the waiting list since FY 1990. It shows only people receiving no services, not those in service waiting for additional services. Since 1990, the number of people being served has grown by 2,685 and the waiting list has grown by 1,337. The average annual growth in the number of individuals being served is 5.21 percent versus 8.68 percent for the individuals on the waiting list. Starting in FY 2006, the number of individuals waiting for services started to decline.



The following table shows the net growth in the waiting list since 1998:

Division of Services for People with Disabilities Waiting List History					
FY	Total Number Waiting	Total Number New to Waiting List	Total Number Funded with Allocation	Total Number Removed ¹ from Waiting List	Net Growth in Waiting List
1998	1,120	430	186	69	1,295
1999	1,295	397	239	135	1,318
2000	1,318	566	251	184	1,449
2001	1,449	645	63	368	1,663
2002	1,663	432	72	146	1,877
2003	1,877	389	0	319	1,947
2004	1,947	293	0	295	1,945
2005	1,945	374	85	395	1,839
2006	1,839	486	292	198	1,835
2007	1,835	416	400	197	1,654
2008	1,654		235		
1 Removed because moved out state, moved to Intermediate Care Facility or Nursing Home, died, failed to return annual waiting list survey, requested to be removed, change in eligibility, change in needs, or unable to locate					

Additional Staff Requested

DSPD has requested 13 additional FTE to handle the increased caseload of 450 individuals being placed into service from the waiting list. Support coordinators work with clients and their families to complete individual service plans, coordinate the services needed and ensure that the contract providers are providing the services before approval of payments. Each caseworker manages about 30 cases. The ratio of 30:1 currently has the support of the Medicaid funding agencies based on the management rates established by the Utah Department of Health and the federal Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS). In addition, there is a 7:1 ratio of caseworkers to supervisors. The additional employees would expend approximately \$855,500 of the \$6.655 million request. The following table shows that with the FY 2009 request, the number of new caseworkers and supervisors needed based on the accepted ratio is 13 (11 caseworkers and 2 supervisors as highlighted):

DSPD Caseload Analysis					
A	B	C	D	E	F
	Number of Cases	Current Number of Caseworkers	Current Caseload / Caseworker (B/C)	Number of Supervisors	Supervisors per Caseworkers (C/E)
FY 2008 Estimate	4,674	155.00	30.15	21	7.38
FY 2008 Anticipated Attrition	(110)				
FY 2009 Request	450	11.00		2	
Total	5,014.00	166.00	30.20	23	7.35

Based on this analysis, the total number of caseworkers needed for the FY 2009 Request is 11 and 2 supervisors for a total of 13 FTE

Efforts to Fund the Waiting List

Since 1998, the Legislature has increased the base service budgets by approximately \$8.7 million in new state funding to provide services for people on the waiting list. In FY 2008, the Legislature appropriated \$1 million in General Fund to help with the waiting list resulting in about 235 people or 14 percent of the list receiving services. The following table shows the efforts made toward reducing the waiting list:

Division of Services for People with Disabilities Waiting List Funding History						
FY	# Served	% Change in # Served	Waiting List	% Change in Waiting List	Waiting List General Fund Appropriations	
1998	3,556	2.45%	1,120	6.57%	\$1,000,000	
1999	3,688	3.71%	1,295	15.63%	\$1,300,000	
2000	3,903	5.83%	1,318	1.78%	\$1,365,000	
2001	3,960	1.46%	1,449	9.94%	\$346,900	
2002	4,107	3.71%	1,663	14.77%	\$400,000	
2003	4,129	0.54%	1,877	12.87%	\$0	
2004	4,139	0.24%	1,947	3.73%	\$0	
2005	4,304	3.99%	1,945	-0.10%	\$300,000	
2006	4,449	3.37%	1,839	-5.45%	\$1,000,000	
2007	4,674	5.06%	1,835	-0.22%	\$2,000,000	
2008	Final Information is not available until fiscal year end 6/30/08				\$1,000,000	
Total					\$8,711,900	

In addition to the funding for the waiting list, the Legislature has also provided funding for two pilot programs, the Supported Employment and Family Preservation Pilot programs. DSPD uses a triage method for the waiting list to determine who will move off the waiting list into Medicaid Home and Community Based Waiver services. Many of the individuals have been on the list for years because they are not as critical. These pilot programs provide services to individuals at the bottom of the list who need limited services. The clients served in this program would not be brought into the Medicaid waiver services therefore they would not qualify for federal matching funds.

RECOMMENDATION

The Analyst recommends the Subcommittee place \$1,100,000 from the General Fund for FY 2009 on a priority list. The Analyst also recommends that the Division of Services for People with Disabilities be authorized 6 additional FTE. This will address the needs of about 260 individuals which represent about 15 percent of the waiting list.